

Setting the Tone for an Inclusive Classroom: Some Practices to Consider

*In any discipline, instructors can take deliberate steps to ensure that all students feel welcomed and valued as part of the learning community*¹

- Clarify the instructor's and students' respective roles in shaping and guiding discussion. What are their responsibilities, what are yours? When and why might these shift?
- Clarify your pedagogical aims for the ways students will consider course material relative to their own lived experiences. When, how much, and in what ways are students encouraged to share from their own experiences?

2. Build rapport and community in your class.

- Learn students' names, use them, and encourage other students to use them. In large classes, this could include using name cards or nametags for at least the first several meetings.
- Use icebreakers throughout the semester. These can be activities or questions that are directly pertinent to course learning goals but give students opportunities to share from their individual experience.
- Incorporate peer learning in your class, using pairs and groups in meaningful ways to enhance learning and provide practice with key skills and concepts.
- Give students regular opportunities to reflect upon ways their learning has been enhanced by interaction with classmates. This could be as simple as asking them to

4. Help students develop awareness of multiple visible and invisible identities in the classroom. This can take pressure off underrepresented students to play the role of those who “have” race, sexual orientation, a disability, etc.

- Invite everyone in the room to think about how their experience has been shaped by their identities. For instance: In turning to course content that raises questions about sexuality, you might launch discussion by asking students to reflect individually on: “Do you have a label for your sexual orientation? Where did you learn it? Why do you use it? Do you label your sexuality differently in differ